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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 01, 2007

**¶11.** This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 01, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL:

**¶12.** BOLGE / EKSPRES / SABAH (GUNEY): Adana Governor Ilhan Atis, during a meeting with primary school inspectors, reminded that the Turkish Republic was a secular and social state that observed the rule of law. Atis said that the inspectors should ensure the children are being raised in a system that encouraged positive thinking and science as well as placing importance on Turkish values and traditions. Atis warned the inspectors that they should not show tolerance to people at schools who are engaging in anti-secular activities.

**¶13.** HURRIYET: Provincial chairmen of the DTP (Democratic Society Party) and SDP (Socialist Democracy Party) held a joint press announcement in Istanbul, criticized the statement issued by the Office of Chief of Staff over the weekend, and extended support to the government.

**¶14.** GUNDEM: Prosecutors have been actively working, reports the daily, to open court cases and investigations against DTP for a while. Ayhan Karabulut, DTP provincial chairperson in Batman, have been facing 29 years of prison sentence in a court case opened because of a press announcement Karabulut made, which criticized the police's reported harsh attitude during the violent unrest that took place in Diyarbakir on March 30, 2006. The court case is brought on charges of being a member of the terrorist organization and damaging public property.

**¶15.** GUNDEM: Turkish employers who have trade relationships in northern Iraq are reportedly worried about a possible cross-border military operation that the Turkish Army could conduct in northern Iraq. Employers are of the opinion that economic interests are being disregarded by military authorities as they are finding military solutions to address political issues.

**¶16.** GUNDEM: Police, who summoned 22 of the 33 people to the security director's office in Diyarbakir's Bismil district to take their statements because of an investigation opened against them for violating the law on holding demonstrations, detained the people when they arrived at the security director's office. DTP's Bismil district chairperson is among the detainees.

¶ 7. GUNDEM: The readers of the Kurdish Azadiya Welat newspaper and Gundem newspaper in Siirt reportedly filed a complaint against the Turkish Chief of Staff Yasar Buyukanit. Spokesperson of the group said that the remarks of Buyukanit were harming the democratic state and the rule of law.

¶ 8. SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE: Serdar Seyhan, CHP Provincial Chairperson in Adana, made a call to everybody to take part in the May 1 Labor Day March in Adana. Separately, Seyhan announced the party's candidate who will be running for the elections that will determine the new mayor of Adana's Karatas district. Seyhan told journalists that he will talk with Governor Atis about the issue of ensuring the security of the votes and election officials during the election on May 2 (see press summary for April 27).

#### SECURITY:

¶ 9. GUNDEM: Unidentified people threw a Molotov cocktail at the DTP provincial party building in Eskisehir. A small fire broke out and material damage was reported following the incident.

¶ 10. GUNDEM: According to the daily, a total of nearly 68 military operations were conducted in April in the southeastern region. The daily points out to the death toll that resulted from that military activity.

#### CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

¶ 11. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Jandarma teams searched a truck and caught 53 people who entered the country illegally in Van's Baskale district. 39 Afghan, 11 Bangladeshi and 3 Pakistani nationals will be deported soon.

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¶ 12. SABAH (GUNEY): Jandarma teams cracked down on drug dealers at a jandarma check point in Gaziantep and found 54,000 Captagon pills worth 1-million-YTL in a car that attempted to flee the scene. Nine people have been detained.

#### CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

¶ 13. EKSPRES / BOLGE / SABAH (GUNEY): A section of the Ceyhan-Kirikkale pipeline in Adana's Pozanti district was damaged by heavy machinery accidentally during construction going on in a section of a highway over the weekend. A small scale explosion took place and fire ensued when oil leaked from the pipeline. Authorities immediately stopped the flow of oil in the pipeline and the fire was taken under control by the firefighters. Today's local papers report that authorities prevented the oil from spilling into the Seyhan River. Sabah reports that the spill is threatening the Seyhan Dam.

¶ 14. EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: The heavy rain that fell the previous day caused flooding in some sections of Sirnak's Cizre and Silopi districts. 700 houses and 270 business incurred material damage in Cizre. Kizilay (Turkish Red Crescent) sent tents, blankets, beds and heaters to the areas that were affected. There is currently power outage in the district and a crisis desk has been established by the Cizre Municipality. People in the two districts are trying to remove the water from their houses with the help of municipality teams. A DTP delegation conducted studies at the sites in Cizre hit by the disaster.

¶ 15. GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Nearly one hundred forty-five people were poisoned by gas that spread after an explosion took place at a 400-liter chlorine tank of the municipality water network system in Sanliurfa's Suruc district over the weekend. Suruc subgovernor announced that an investigation will take place and a report about the event will be prepared.

¶ 16. GUNDEM: Hundreds of people reportedly attended the funeral ceremonies held separately for two PKK members in

Sirnak's Beytussebap and Ulukisla districts. PKK members were killed during operations on April 28 in Beytussebap.

¶17. GUNDEM: Four mayors (from DYP) resigned from their parties in Kahramanmaraş on grounds that the mayors were not happy about the policies DYP pursued about the presidential elections.

¶18. EVRENSEL / GUDNEM: The dailies advertised big celebratory messages of the Diyarbakır Mayor and district mayors marking the May 1 Labor Day.

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